

THE GEOGRAPHY OF CALIFORNIA

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The geography of California by Harold W. Fairbanks

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HAROLD W. FAIRBANKS

**THE GEOGRAPHY
OF CALIFORNIA**

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BY

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*Stories of Our Mother Earth, Home Geography, Rocks
and Minerals, The Western United States,
Practical Physiography,
Etc.*

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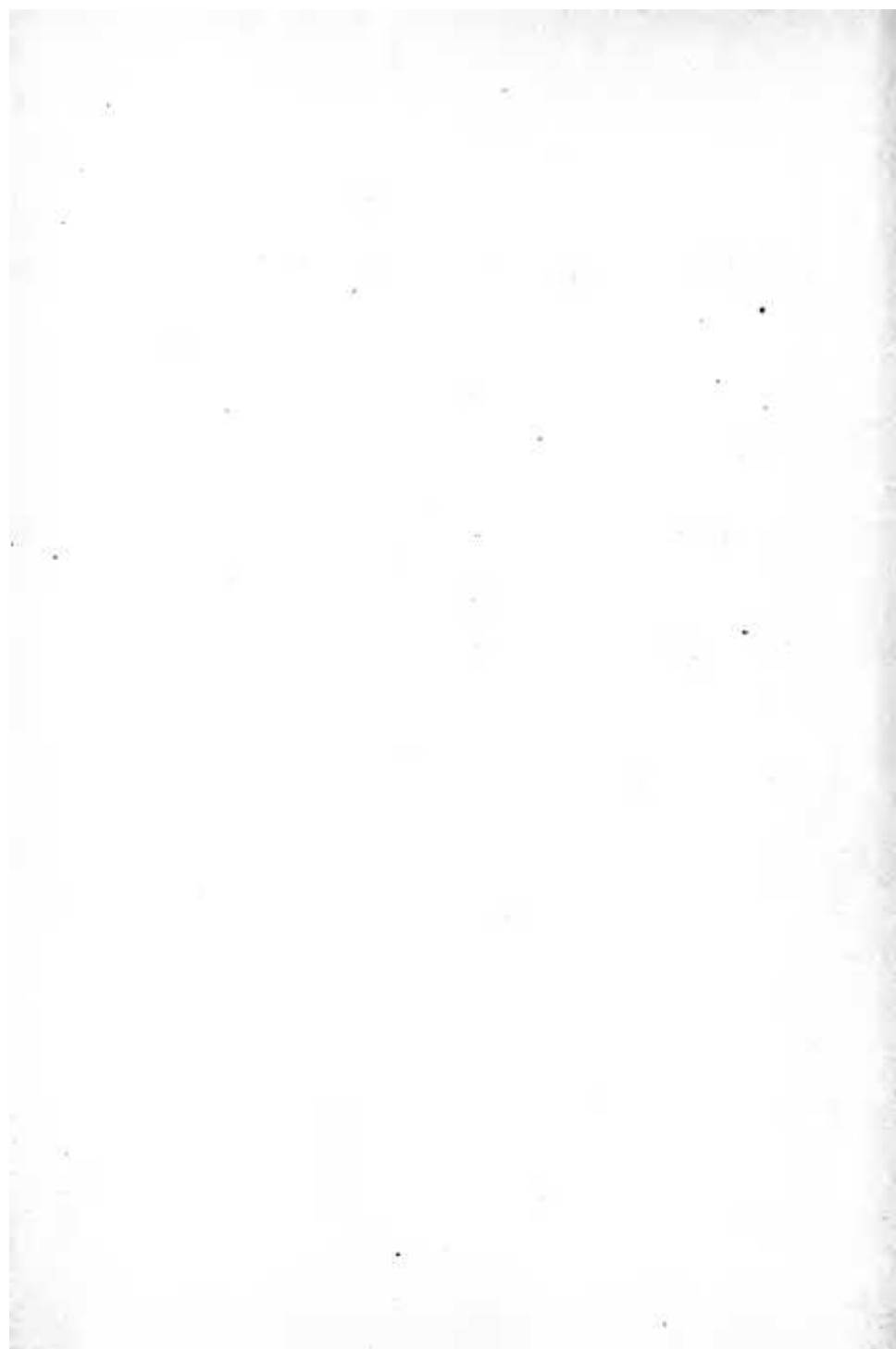
INTRODUCTION.

The geography of California is a vast and many sided subject which has never yet been adequately treated. It is not the intention of the author in presenting this little hand-book to take up the subject in an exhaustive manner, for that would require a large volume. Nor is his intention to present a mere description of the various aspects of the geography of the State, for this has already been done, although in an inadequate manner, in various little school supplements and advertising pamphlets. Moreover, mere description cannot impart real geographic knowledge, since we must know something of causes and relations.

The object which the author has in mind is rather to give a simple and yet detailed description of the conditions under which we are living, and weave them into a connected and rational whole, so that teachers and pupils may acquire the elements of a rational knowledge of California. As our work in geography is at present outlined it is ridiculously unphilosophical as well as thoroughly inadequate.

The geography of California is extraordinarily varied and interesting. Children should not leave school without some elementary conceptions of the origin and meaning of the physical features about them, of the strongly contrasted climatic conditions, and of the influence which these exert upon our lives.

To meet the above need the author has woven together in a simple manner as possible those facts and relations which should be known and appreciated by every educated resident of California.



CHAPTER I.

A GENERAL SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA.

The fabled "Isle of California" described in an old Spanish romance as lying in the South Seas was peopled with Amazons, Griffins, and contained stores of gold. What was more natural then, than that the large body of land discovered off the west coast of Mexico by a Spanish commander under Cortez, and supposed to be an island, should receive the name of California? To be sure, the new land was not known to contain gold, or had any monsters been seen, but this mattered little to the imaginative Spaniards.

For more than two hundred years there was difference of opinion as to whether this land which we now know as Lower California was an island or a part of the mainland. In a geography published in London in 1725 California is described and mapped as a large island extending north to the Straits of Anian (Puget Sound). In this book all that is known of California is given in one paragraph, a part of which reads as follows: "This island was formerly esteemed a peninsula, but now found to be entirely surrounded with water. Its north part was discovered by Sir Francis Drake, Anno 1577, and by him called New Albion, where, erecting a pillar, he fastened thereto the arms of England. The inland parts were afterwards searched into, and being found to be only a dry, barren, cold country, Europeans were discouraged from sending colonies to the same, so that it still remains in the hands of the natives."